

# COME ! JOIN US IN SUPPORTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF GARMENT WORKERS

Gap, WalMart, Lee, Levis, Nike, Wrangler, Peter England, these are some world famous brands that ready made clothing carry. The mere use of the name of these brands earns companies crores of rupees. The minimum cost of a single piece of clothing sold under the name of these brands is Rs.1500/-. These brands are worn by customers not just as a statement of fashion but also as a matter of pride and prestige, for which, people pay thousands of rupees. If one were to look carefully at who actually manufactures these clothes that are sold under the brand names- the labour of poor women will be evident.

The fact is that branded clothes sold in America, Australia, Europe and Japan are manufactured in villages in and around factories in Bangalore by women workers from the villages of Kencheyanahalli, Gangoandanahalli, Avahalli, Nayandahalli, Archakarahalli, Bannikuppe and Byatarayanapura. Ratnamma, Madina, Anita, Netra, Sowmya, Mallika, Leena, Sundaramma and Shobha are the names of some of the women who work in the various sections and divisions of Gokuldas Group of companies, Texport Group of Companies, Bombay Rayon Fashion Limited and Shahi Exports.

Women workers who work for 8 to 10 hours a day, like machines amidst numerous machines in these factories work, earning monthly salary that is equivalent to the cost of two pants! The fabric that is used in the manufacture of these garments is cultivated using soil, electricity and labour from here-our land- our soil- our water. The woven fabric is dyed, cut, stitched, and packaged by these women workers.

More than one lakh crores of rupees is earned in foreign exchange from the export of garments. Out of this, garment factories in and around Bangalore, contribute about fifteen thousand crore rupees. The local garment factories earn only 25% of the final price of the garment paid by the consumer in the USA and Europe – the other 75% is earned by the big international brands. The women who labor in these factories get a monthly salary of Rs 4500 or Rs 5000. The bonus they manage to get are scoldings, inhuman working conditions and harassment.

Bangalore houses most of the country's garment industry and is also known for the superior quality of the clothes made. The garments manufactured here are sold world wide. Some of the huge companies make a business worth 100 to 1000 crores, and offer work to 10 to 30 thousand workers. There is considerable increase in the profit these companies are making.

The garment factories have generated employment in Bangalore city drawing from the migrant workers from the districts of Bangalore Rural, Tumkur, Mysore, Bellary and other areas.

According to government records 920 companies employ 6.55 lakh workers. In reality 5lakh workers are employed in garment factories in Bangalore and most of this labour comprises of migrant women. The women who migrate for this work are largely belonging to dalit and minority communities. Most of these women are sole bread winners of their families. These workers get minimum wages declared by the gov, while there are also companies that pay workers wages less than the declared minimum wage. In fact, most garment workers, work for more than 8 hours a day but are paid no over time.

## MINIMUM WAGE NOTIFICATION:

Although minimum wages for the garment industry have been fixed by the government at Rs.157 per day, some factories pay less than the mandated wage. According to the Minimum Wages Act, there must be a periodic revision of minimum wages every 2 to 5 years. After the last revision in 2001, minimum wages for the garment industry were revised in 2009. In March 2012, it would have been three years since the last revision. There must be an immediate revision of minimum wages. Further, the revision must ensure a fair living wage for garment workers.

## HARASSMENT FREE WORKPLACE:

Garment workers routinely face many types of harassment from their superiors. These include, fixing unrealistic production targets, not allowing them to take leave they are legally entitled to, sexual harassment at the workplace, abuses in vulgar language, being made to stand for hours without being given work, being made to wait at the gate for small infractions, throwing cloth at the workers face, and humiliating workers in front of their peers.

As per the Supreme Court guideline in Vishakha v. State of Rajasthan, every workplace must have a committee to address and prevent sexual harassment at the workplace. However, many garment factories have no such mechanism to redress complaints of sexual harassment.

An environment free from sexual harassment is a fundamental right and we demand that all factories comply with the Supreme Court guidelines.

## CRECHE:

Most of the women workers come from other towns/villages. A Child care facility at the workplace is an essential for women workers. As per labour law, any factory employing more than 30 women workers must have a crèche that is managed by a trained ayah.

Most factories do not have the facility of a crèche and in those that do have crèches; these are poorly staffed and lack the proper infrastructure.

Factory owners must comply with legal mandate of providing crèches inside the factory premises.

***'JUSTICE FOR GARMENT WORKERS' is supported by the following among other organizations and individuals-***

- Garments Mahila Karmikara Munnade, ● Garment and Textile Workers Union (GATWU), ● Vimochana, ● Manasa Balaga, ● Hengasara Hakkina Sangha, ● Samanata Mahila Vedike, ● Alternative Law Forum, ● Hind Mazdoor Kisan Panchayat, ● Dr. Vijaya (Journalist), ● Du Saraswati (Writer), ● Hemalatha Mahishi, (Advocate) ● C.H. Hanumantharaya (Advocate), ● Dr. C.S. Dwarkanath (Former President, Karnataka Backward Classes Commission), ● Banjagere Jayaprakash (Litterateur), ● B.Suresh (Film Director), ● Manjunath Adde (Journalist), ● Indudhara Honnapur, Editor, Samvada, ● Dr. Vasundhara Bhupati (President, Karnataka Lekhakiyara sangha).

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